

Rep. Pete Stark, Ranking Democrat on the Ways and Means Health Subcommittee, today issued the following statement:

Someone has lost \$132 billion, mostly in tax cuts. Please call me at 202-225-5065 if you find it.

President Bush promised to spend about \$132 billion over 10 years to help reduce the number of uninsured, largely through the use of refundable tax credits and expansion of community health centers. The Bush Administration tax proposals announced yesterday do not include any money for tax credits for the uninsured.

Are they forgetting the 43 million uninsured now that the election's over? Did the idea get lost?

There are a lot of tax ideas that didn't make it into President Bush's tax cut proposal, which is why Democrats note that the total number of tax cuts this year will be way over \$1.6 trillion, and probably over \$2 trillion—and that these massive cuts will return us to the days of huge Federal deficits. That's why we need a budget blueprint, before we start down the road of tax cuts.

The Bush health insurance refundable tax credit of \$1000 for an individual and \$2000 for a family doesn't work, of course, but it was a place-holder we could have built on.

Who are the uninsured? The working poor—the people having trouble filling gas tanks in their cars and paying for heating oil this winter. What does health insurance cost? About \$2300 per year for an individual and \$6400 for a family.

The Bush \$1000 and \$2000 credit is way too small to ensure that many working poor will be able to use it.

But it is a start, and it is sad that the Administration's small effort to end the national disgrace of 43 million uninsured is not in their first tax bill.

When the Ways and Means Committee considers the tax bill, I will try to make sure they remember—and put their money where their mouths are. We can and should reduce the huge tax cuts for the very rich and use that money to start addressing the problem of the uninsured.